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ABSTRACT

The impetus giving rise to U.S. outdoor education was composed of the organized camping program and educators who saw possibilities of using a camp setting to provide students with real experiences in the out-of-doors, while the major push in Canada came from the public's growing concern with the need for conservation of natural resources. The early period of the organized camping movement in the U.S. (1900-1935) was a reaction to rigidity of the school's curricula. By 1965 school camping had become only one aspect of the outdoor education movement, and federal legislation greatly influenced the growth and development of outdoor education programs. Organized camping also had a strong influence in Canada, where there was a voluntary youth training program in conservation prior to World War II. Subsequently, interest in conservation led to curriculum changes, counselor training programs, involvement of voluntary organizations, and establishment of residential programs in outdoor education. Provincial enabling legislation encouraged schools to own and operate natural science schools and to take field trips. Regardless of the factors that initiated their outdoor education programs, the present concept held in both countries is that outdoor education involves use of the out-of-doors in teaching a school's curriculum. (BRR)

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A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION

1861 - 1978

by

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Canada

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A HISTORICAL SURVEY OF OUTDOOR EDUCATION 1861-1978

The United States

The most significant movement which influenced the growth and development of outdoor education as we know it today is the school camping movement. This movement (school camping) has its origins in the lifestyle and practices of the North American Indians. Through application of the historical principle of sequence, it is evident that the Indian and the Pioneer way of life formed the basis of the early camping programs. Freeberg and Taylor (1961) in their book, Philosophy of Outdoor Education, trace the beginnings of outdoor education from prehistoric man up to the present day. Lloyd B. Sharp, one of the earliest leaders in outdoor education, based his philosophy and living style on the belief that every child should be exposed to the skills possessed by the early settlers.

There was a sequence of events that occurred in American History that shows the transition of camping as a way of life to camping as part of a school's curriculum. The assertion is that there was a general protest against the narrowness of the early school's curricula. This protest arises from our natural heritage of outdoor living. Education was moving further and further from a family responsibility and function. The advent of the machine age, industrialization, specialization of jobs, and urbanization are all factors that helped to bring about the advent of school camping. These changes in lifestyle and educational practices made it possible for most children to grow up in an environment which would not naturally include any information on man's relationship to nature. Because of our outdoor tradition the occurence of industrialization is one of the factors that led to the rise of the school camping movement. The programs and successes of organized camps which began

around 1810 helped to bring about the acceptance of school campings in the eighteen forties by educators and the general public.

George Bancroft and Joseph Cogswell, between 1823 and 1824, sponsored the first venture into the outdoors by an American school at Round Hill School (Greenwich, Conn.) They established outdoor education, camping, and hiking as part of the school's curriculum. Annual trips were taken for fishing, trapping, geological investigation, and for viewing places and things. The first organized camp in the United States was established in 1861 at Washington, Connecticut, by M.F. Gunn. The Gunnery Schools' two-week summer camp was so successful that it continued to operate as part of the School's regular curriculum until 1879.

A number of other camps were started after Gunn's summer camp efforts. Camp Chocura was founded in 1881, Camp Dudley in 1885, and Camp Algonquin in 1886; to mention only a few of the private camps that were established in the late nineteen hundreds. The programs of these camps were designed primarily to offset the influences of urbanization and to "return to nature". They lacked structure and were rugged and unhygienic.

The early period of the organized camping movement (1900-1935) was a reaction to the rigidity of the school's curricula. It was intended that the freedom of a camp would provide the basic experiences in nature that the schools could not. The schools' curricula expanded from the "three R's" and became crowded with new subjects. They lost the ability to provide basic first-hand experiences as part of their program. Everything was being taught within the four walls of the classroom, even though most of the material taught originated in the outdoors. Educators felt that a more realistic approach to education was needed. Organized camping was seen as the way schools could provide more realistic experiences for their students.

There were four basic types of sponsorship for organized camps: private, agency, church and institutional. The first organized camps were fee-charging private camps. The Children's Aid Society of New York established the first agency camp in 1872. The number of camps sponsored by agencies increased rapidly after 1900, especially after the First World War. The Boy Scouts of America, the Girl Scouts, and the Campfire Girls camp programs began in 1912.

Church-sponsored camp programs began in 1880 with the Reverend George W. Henckley's camp. The Methodist, Baptist and Christian denominations were the most involved in camping programs and by 1957 there were over 4500 church-operated camps.

The earliest record of a public-sponsored camp is 1912 when the Board of Education of Dubuque, Iowa, helped the Visiting Nurse Association of Dubuque to establish a summer camp for malnourished children. Major F.L. Beal founded Camp Roosevelt, a joint venture of Chicago's Board of Education and an association of businessmen.

As early as 1917 some educators were predicting that summer camps would eventually be tax-supported and controlled by the schools. In 1917, J.M. Taylor of Temple University made that proposal. A forestry camp operated by the Los Angeles schools and the Irvington Health Camp at Irvington, New Jersey, both in 1925, are two more examples of early public camps. There were at least seven other camps maintained or directed by boards of education early in the 1930's and by 1937 there were thirty-three public school camps operating throughout the country.

The New York City Works Project Administration, the New York City Park Department, and the New York Board of Education started a day camp project in 1934. The success of this project led to the New York City School Camp

Experiment.

Prior to the 1930's, the purpose of the camping movement was valued mainly for its recreational and health benefits. By the end of the 1930's educational goals and practices of camping had undergone changes. The two key individuals who were most inf uential in establishing outdoor education as we view it today were Lloyd B. Sharp and Julian W. Smith. In its earliest stages outdoor education was synonymous with school camping but it has evolved to the point where school camping is just one aspect of outdoor education. The importance of education in the out-of-doors has led to the application of experiences encountered while camping to the educational practices and curricula of the schools.

Alcott Newell had investigated the educational implications of summer camps and a School for the Open, an organized educational camp, by 1925. At the same time, Sharp started to extend the programs of the Life Fresh Air Fund to include more general educational aims than camping skills. At Sussex, New Jersey, in 1940, six-week camps in outdoor education were offered and participants were given an academic credit by New York University.

The Outdoor Education Association was started in 1951 by Sharp and was incorporated by 1953. This association aimed to spread the benefits of outdoor education to young and old through any and all pertinent agencies. It was in 1958 that Sharp started advocating the use of schoolyards as a place for outdoor education. He wished to establish that the need for camping should originate from the material taught as part of the schools' curricula.

J.W. Smith, G. Donaldson and H. Masters were the main persons responsible for the rapid growth and acceptance of school camping in the State of Michigan. In 1945 a law enacted by the Michigan State Legislature allowed schools to own and operate camps as part of a school program.

Starting in 1946, Smith was director of the Kellogg Foundation's experimental program of camping and outdoor education. Donaldson directed Kellogg's Clear Lake Camp and in 1949 his assistant, L.S. Clark, became director. It was Clark, in 1951, who defined the basic objective of the school camp as "an extension of the classroom to provide an outdoor laboratory for experiences that would be in harmony with the generally accepted tenets of education: social living, work experiences, healthy living, outdoor education, and a supplement of classroom instruction (Lewis, 1968).

The term "outdoor education" was rarely used in the literature prior to 1940. Starting in the middle of the 1940's and continuing until the middle of the 1950's the term outdoor education was used to describe certain of the experiences encountered in a camp's curriculum. Later this same term was used to cover a number of learning experiences and areas that occurred outdoors. During this period, when the concept of outdoor education became more widely accepted, the school camping movement became one of school camping and outdoor education.

By 1965 school camping had become only one aspect of the outdoor education movement. The concept of outdoor education has now become "a direct, simple method for learning that extends the curriculum to the out-of-doors for the purpose of learning. It is based on the discovery approach to learning and it appeals to the use of the senses -- audio, visual, taste, touch and smell -- for observation and perception." (Lewis, 1968). To state it more simply, "outdoor education is learning in and for the outdoors." (Smith, 1973).

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 enacted by the United States federal government was of great importance to the growth and development of the outdoor education programs that occurred in the United States since then. The part of the Act which supported the movement of the

classroom into the community itself was called Programs to Advance Creativity in Education (PACE). Summer or all-year educational camps were included as definite funding possibilities by the U.S. Office of Education within their grant guidelines.

At present, outdoor education in the United States is an important aspect of education. The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) has published a Review of Research Related to Environmental Education every year from 1971 to 1978 inclusive. These reviews provide enough evidence to show that outdoor education is an accepted, important, and growing part of today's educational curricula. There are many reports on the outdoor education programs that have been developed at all levels of education, elementary, junior high, senior high, college and university. Evaluations of outdoor education programs are more evident as are preparatory courses on outdoor education to prepare teachers at both the preservice and inservice levels. In many cases the term outdoor education is either synonymous with or part of the following list of terms: conservation education, recreational education, environmental education, and integrated education.

Canada

The origin of Canada's outdoor education and environmental study programs are attributed to all those teachers across Canada who found educational value in camping, gardening, athletic field days and nature study trips as part of their school's curriculum. Organized camping and the camping programs of the Boy Scouts, the Girl Scouts, and the YM(YW)CA had a strong influence on Canada's outdoor education programs just as it did in the United States. The Canadian programs received support in theory and practice from some of the United States' leaders in the fields of outdoor education and recreation;

men like Lloyd B. Sharp, J.B. Nash, Julian Smith and John Kirk.

There was a growing concern over the abuse and mismanagement of our natural resources prior to World War II. The Canadian Forestry Association's Director in British Columbia, Charles Wilkinson, started a voluntary youth training program in conservation. Over 12,000 Junior Forest Wardens had been trained by 1931.

Shortly after the Second World War minor curriculum changes occurred in a few provinces because of a growing interest in conservation. At one of the first conferences on Education and Conservation Dr E.G. Pleva, University of Western Ontario, emphasized strongly the importance of relating what is taught in the classroom to what actually is found outside the classroom.

The first camp counsellor training program was organized in Ontario in 1945 at Lake Couchiching and another at Bark Lake. One of the first voluntary organizations to become involved in conservation education was the Ontario Forestry Association. It organized a special summer school in conservation education for the Dryden and Espanola school systems in 1953. In 1957 the Manitoba Forestry Association sponsored a summer camp for Winnipeg school students.

Robin Dennis of the Toronto Board of Education started on Toronto Island what was probably the first residential program in outdoor education for schools in Canada. The Albion Hills Conservation Field Centre was established in 1962 by the Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. This came about primarily through the efforts of Blanche Snell, a social studies teacher. She was one of the first Canadian teachers to recognize the educational values that are part of a residential camping program.

The Ontario Legislature passed the Schools Administration Act in 1965 which allowed school boards with over 10,000 pupils to own land and operate natural science schools. This Act was amended in 1972 to allow all school boards, regardless of pupil enrollment, to operate such programs. The Province of Alberta in 1970 enacted legislation that encouraged the schools to take trips for cultural, educational and recreational purposes.

There was an Outdoor Education Conference held at Fort Qu'Appelle, Saskatchewan, in the fall of 1975. This writer attended along with two other professors from his university. The Province of Ontario had a large representation at this conference and the information they gave indicated a strong commitment to residential and day camp programs in outdoor education. Alberta was strongly committed to a program of outdoor education that emphasized both the recreational and educational aspects. British Columbia seemed to be slightly more advanced in establishing an outdoor education than was Saskatchewan. The remaining six provinces were, according to the reports given, in various stages of initiating outdoor education programs or expressed an interest in doing so.

The impetus that gave rise to outdoor education in the United States is composed of the organized camping program and a number of educators who saw the possibilities of using a camp setting as the means of providing students with real experiences in the out-of-doors. In Canada, the major "push" came from the public's growing concern with the need for conservation of its country's natural resources. A look through the Dissertation Abstracts International, the Directory of Educational Studies in Canada, and the Onteris Abstracts revealed a marked increase in research and articles dealing with beginning outdoor education programs, the evaluation of them, and how best to prepare and convince teachers to use an outdoor education approach to

teaching. Regardless of what the factors were that initiated the outdoor education programs in the two countries, the present concept held by both countries is that outdoor education involves the use of the out-of-doors in the teaching of a school's curriculum.

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